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THE BAPTIST

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

SBC messengers convene in Phoenix

PHOENIX (BP) — A pledge to build "Kingdom families" founded upon biblical principles and mandates highlighted the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 17-18 in Phoenix.

The denomination held its first-ever Kingdom Family Rally June 16, a day before the convention officially began and the last day of the Pastors' Conference. Messengers at the rally signed covenant cards pledging to follow Seven Pillars of a Kingdom Family, such as Honoring God's Authority, Respecting Human Life, and Serving My Church.

The succeeding days saw Southern Baptists stand firm on other issues that affect the family.

An eight-member task force on ministry to homosexuals released its report, encouraging Southern Baptist churches to reach out to homosexuals while standing firm on the truth that homosexuality is a sin. Also, messengers adopted a pro-life resolution renouncing pro-choice statements by previous convention bodies and leaders, particularly those of the 1970s.

President Bush addressed the convention by a pre-taped message, the second straight year he has addressed messengers in some form. A handful of evangelicals, including Charles Colson, Jim Cymbala and John MacArthur, also delivered taped messages, thanking the SBC for its pro-family and biblical stances.

Franklin Graham, Hank Hanegraaff, Joseph Stowell, Greg Laurie, and Stephen Olford also delivered brief pre-recorded messages.

In business matters, messengers overwhelmingly defeated an effort to amend the SBC operating budget to restore a \$125,000 reduction (out of \$425,000) in funding for the Baptist World Alliance.

Several thousand families pledged in writing to build their families upon the Seven Pillars: Honoring God's Authority, Respecting Human Life, Exercising Moral Purity, Serving My Church, Using Time Wisely, Practicing Biblical Stewardship and



SOUTHERN BAPTISTS GATHER — More than 7,000 messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting gathered in the Phoenix Civic Center on June 17-18 for the 146th session of the SBC, which is in its 158th year. No figures were available for messengers from individual states. (BP photo by Van Payne)

SBC OFFICERS — Dallas-area pastor Jack Graham (center), unanimously reelected to as second term at president of the Southern Baptist Convention, stands with fellow officers elected during the June 17-18 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix: (from left) Jim Wells, registration secretary and a Missouri associational director of missions; John Yeats, recording secretary and editor of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger; Rob Zinn, first vice president and pastor, Immanuel Church, Highland, Calif.; and Bill Wagner, second vice president and professor of evangelism and missions, Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif. (BP photo)



Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The pillars were developed by the SBC Council of Family Life, which announced that Kingdom Family Conferences will be held in various locations beginning this fall. The first one will take place in Oklahoma City Aug. 11-12, followed by conferences in Wheat Ridge, Colo., Sept. 4-5; Brandon, Fla., Oct. 2-3; and Highland, Calif., Nov. 6-7.

Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, serves as a member of the Council.

The task force on ministry to homosexuals was formed by LifeWay Christian Resources and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission following the 2001 SBC meeting. Speaking in Phoenix, task force members said Southern Baptists can share the Gospel with homosexuals and reach out to them in other ways while not compromising the biblical truth that homosexuality is a sin.

In other noteworthy matters:

- Registration totals reached 7,077, with messengers representing all 50 states.

- Messengers passed eight resolutions, including ones renouncing all anti-Semitism, opposing same-sex "marriage," supporting global AIDS humanitarian efforts, endorsing Operation Iraqi Freedom, reaffirming the biblical model of marriage, and the resolution on abortion.

- Messengers overwhelmingly defeated a move to restore reduced funding to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) in the 2003-04 SBC operating budget. While the change

has yet to take effect, the budget will reduce funding to the BWA from \$425,000 to \$300,000.

- Crossover Arizona, an outreach to local residents held each year prior to the annual meeting, reported that 989 decisions for Christ had been made through June 18.

- International Mission Board representative Don Caswell, who was shot twice in Jibla, Yemen, in December but survived, appeared alongside his wife Teri and their two sons. They thanked Southern Baptists for their prayers and announced they intend to return to Yemen in August.

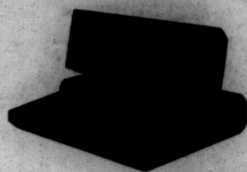
- Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman asked Southern Baptist to fall on their knees and pray for a national "spiritual awakening." Ken Hemphill, formerly president of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, was introduced as the new national strategist for the SBC's Empowering Kingdom Growth initiative.

- International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin reported that missionaries baptized more than 421,000 new believers and planted more than 8,300 churches in 2002.

- North American Mission Board President Robert E. Reccord announced that NAMB will hold a series of "Elevate" conferences next year designed for the 18-29 age group. The first one will be held Jan. 22-24 in suburban Dallas, followed by another one Feb. 19-21 in Charlotte, N.C.

- Presenting his entity's report, Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins challenged pastors and church staff members to stay healthy and "treat your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit."

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Guy Gibson and the course of human history

Guy Penrose Gibson was born in 1918 in India, the son of a British civil servant. An adventurous and self-confident lad, his story is worth retelling to a new generation of patriots.

Gibson was sent to England by his parents to be educated, and promptly joined the Royal Air Force at the age of 18. Pressed into service as a bomber pilot at the outbreak of World War II, he won the Distinguished Flying Cross by the age of 22 and skirted the mandatory six-month furlough after his first tour of duty by wrangling a transfer to fighter aircraft.

He promptly scored four kills as an airborne night fighter and was awarded a bar to his Distinguished Flying Cross. By the age of 23, Gibson had been promoted to the rank of wing commander and received a second posting as a bomber pilot, where he flew 172 sorties in 11 months before being chosen to lead one of the most secret and critically important campaigns of World War II.

Gibson was to direct the formation of the 617th Squadron. The men he recruited were not allowed to know the purpose of the squadron, which was to destroy the dams of the Ruhr Valley in Germany. The dams provided the Nazi industrial complex with copious amounts of hydroelectricity and water needed to prosecute the war.

On the night of May 16, 1943, a total of 19 bombers prepared to take off from an air base in England. Most of the members of the air crews did not expect to return; they had written farewell letters to their wives and mothers. One of the pilots had scrupulously shaved and showered, because he said he wanted to die with dignity.

The toll was indeed high. Only 11 bombers returned. In that one night, 53 men were killed and three men were taken as prisoners of war. The goal of the mission was an unqualified success, however. The huge Mohne and Eder dams were breached and the Sorpe Dam was heavily damaged. Thousands of acres of rich farmland were inundated and unworkable, as well as scores of crucial industrial, com-

munications, and utility facilities.

So shaken were the Germans that they began to concentrate large amounts of men and munitions to protect the country's remaining dams. In addition, the Nazi High Command was forced to divert labor and materials to the repair of the breached dams that had originally been slated for fortifications along the French Atlantic coast.

Military historians believe that the Dambuster Raid, as it came to be known, saved thousands of Allied soldiers' lives on the Normandy coast during the D-Day invasion. Because of the floods that followed the dam breaks, roads and bridges were washed away. What little war materiel that survived the flood could not be quickly transported to the front.

Gibson and his raiders returned to England as heroes. Gibson was relieved of his command so he could go on a public relations tour with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Gibson was restless to return to active duty, however, and see the war to its end. His unrelenting requests to return to active duty were finally answered. Just a few months later, on September 19, 1944, Gibson's bomber did not return from a raid on Rhedyt, Germany. His airplane was found in the Dutch countryside, where a monument now stands to Gibson and his navigator who also perished in the crash. Gibson was 26 years old.

One of the morals of this story is that one person can indeed make a difference. Without Guy Gibson, there may well have never been a 617 Squadron. Without a 617 Squadron, there would have been no dam



breaks. If there had been no dam breaks and the subsequent diversion of precious Nazi resources, the Allied forces at Normandy would likely have been driven back into the sea. It is not an overstatement to note that this one man altered the course of human history.

Most of us will never be called upon to pay the ultimate price for country, as did Guy Gibson, but even today there are many who are willing to do so. For those servicemen and servicewomen so far from home on Independence Day 2003, let us take time to voice a prayer of special thanksgiving for their sacrifices.

It is not an overstatement to note that they too are striving to change the course of human history.

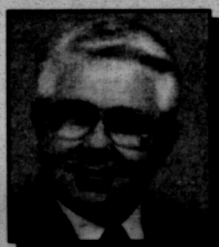
It was in the early years of elementary school that I memorized the words to the first stanza of the National Anthem. Through the years singing the words at church and patriotic events has been done from memory.

Imagine my surprise recently when I had an occasion to read the lyrics. The final words of the first stanza caught my attention: *O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

I had never noticed it. The national anthem ends with a question mark! Evidently it was an urgent question for Francis Scott Key when those words came to his mind. It was a burning question as he strained to see if the American flag was still waving over Fort McHenry.

It is still a good question — a question that is not resigned to a dramatic point in history. It is a relevant question that must be asked and answered again and again by each generation. Many have given the ultimate sacrifice and others sustain continual suffering to keep the answer in the affirmative.

GUEST OPINION:



O'er the Land of the Free?

By Ken Anderson, pastor
First Church, Saltillo

Others have done their parts secure and maintain liberties through community organizations and elected public office. It is very appropriate to celebrate the privileges of freedom gained so dearly, but with freedom comes responsibilities.

Christians' responsibilities are linked to a dual citizenship, — citizens of the state and citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20). As citizens of the Kingdom of God there is an ongoing revolution of change through Jesus Christ. Lives are changed for eternity. As citizens of the Kingdom of God, there is the responsibility to function as salt, light and leaven in the world around them. Such a life-changing revolution cannot be restrained

from relating the word of God to contemporary issues.

At present, society has a growing appetite and capacity for evil. Many are not aware of or refuse to acknowledge the increasing scale of depravity in society. This makes Christian citizenship more urgent and critical.

Throughout my journey as a Christian and Southern Baptist, there have been social issues that have concerned Baptists. There are issues that Baptists promote and advocate and those that are protested and opposed. Many of these issues have been addressed or resolved by those elected to political office.

When taken seriously, Christian citizenship can affect such issues with positive and

lasting change. This involves registering to vote and voting in each election, and being informed of current cultural and political issues.

Articulate your concerns and suggestions to the legislators and affirm them when they stand for righteousness. Be informed of ways to be involved in the political process and pray for those in authority.

The Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention is an excellent resource for information and guidance on social issues and legislative agendas.

Above all, true freedom comes from Christ as Lord and Savior, and there remains the responsibility to allow the love of Christ to influence all of life.

Recently I passed by the post office in Saltillo and saw Old Glory billowing in the wind. Again I was reminded of Key's question. Over what kind of country is our flag flying? The question is ours to answer.

Citizenship and Religious Liberty Sunday will be observed across the Southern Baptist Convention on July 6.

Pastors' Conference puts focus on families

PHOENIX (EN) — "Kingdom families" captured the spotlight of the 2003 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference June 15-16 in Phoenix, even as participants heard a new version of the Monday Night Football song from evangelist Hank Williams.

Headlining the two-day meeting was the first-ever Southern Baptist Convention Kingdom Family Rally held during the closing session June 16. Leading up to the Monday evening rally, Pastors' Conference speakers focused their sermons around the family theme.

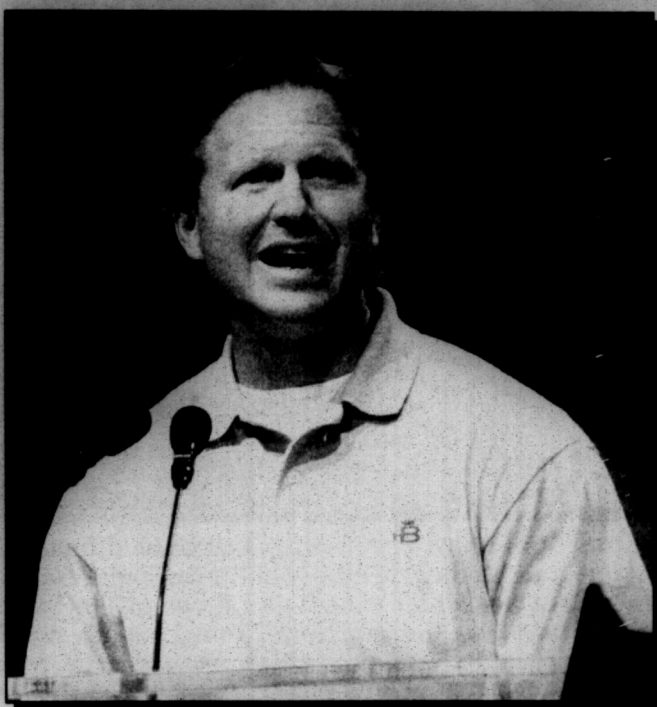
The conference opened on Father's Day, with evangelist Williams performing a special ode to fathers. Williams joked that anyone expecting to hear from Hank Williams the popular country singer was going to be disappointed. However, he shared his own rendition of the country singer's Monday Night Football theme song, Are You Ready for Some Football?

"Are you ready for some preaching, some real Sunday night preaching?" the evangelist wittingly said, adding, "I've got my Bible in my hand and the devil on the run, and all my rowdy friends are going to have some fun tonight."

On a more serious note, Williams turned to what he called the biblical priorities of a minister — God, family, and church. Unfortunately, many ministers since the beginning of time, have struggled to maintain these priorities, he said.

The Hebrew patriarch Moses, for example, "failed to

understand his family was his first priority," Williams said. He warned pastors, "If you don't have a family, you don't have a ministry" — and if a pastor can't manage his own family, "you have no business managing the church and the people of God."



FORMER MISSISSIPPIAN SPEAKS — Hal Kitchings, secretary for the 2003 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, addresses pastors and their families June 16. Kitchings is pastor, First Church, Eustis, Fla., and former pastor of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton. The annual Pastors' Conference was June 15-16 in the Phoenix Civic Center prior to the SBC annual meeting, June 17-18. (BP photo)

Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary drew from Nehemiah 3 to offer advice for developing a winning team in marriages and families. A winning team, he said, consists of two or more individuals moving along a path of interaction marked by three characteristics: totally cooperative, completely organized, and successfully competing for a single objective, he explained.

Christian apologist Josh McDowell, a popular author and youth speaker from Dallas, cautioned parents of temptations facing their children — particularly temptations to believe non-Christian doctrine. He cited a poll that found 65% of "Bible-believing, church going, born-again children" don't believe Satan is real and 68% aren't sure Christianity is true.

These statistics illustrate the number one problem in America, McDowell said: fathers not living up to their responsibility as Christian leaders of their homes and children.

"We are losing our kids not because they are not hearing the truth, but because we are not building relationships with them," he exclaimed.

Humorist Dennis Swanberg sparked laughter during the Monday morning session as he told stories about his grandparents, parents, wife, and children. He challenged pastors to live with laughter, love and without limits.

Chip Roberson, pastor of Bethel Church in Chesapeake, Va., warned pastors about the dangers of letting the flesh rule. Preaching from Ecclesiastes 10:1 and 1 Samuel 25, Roberson said, "When you let the power of the flesh overlord the power of God's Spirit, you are in danger." A minister may have spent years maintaining the proper image and doing the right things, but it can all be thrown away by one bad decision such as looking at Internet pornography, he warned.

"When we allow our lives to go unguarded, when we are in danger of losing it all, God always sends a restrainer," he said, noting "the sovereignty of God does not overrule the free will of man. You don't have to miss God's calling or timing very much to lose it all."

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church of Woodstock, Ga., offered a plea for Baptist families to increase their financial support of the SBC's International Mission Board.

"You are never more like Jesus than when you are giving," he said. "It is time for the Southern Baptist Convention to rise up and say we believe in missions. Now's the day to say: 'Lord, listen. I want to be part of a family who refuses to leave this world the way we found it.'"

Ken Whitten, pastor of Idlewild Church in Tampa, Fla., focused on the pastor's family with a sermon from James 3.

"It is not easy living in a pastor's home," Whitten said. "It is not easy being a parent of preacher's kids."

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He outlined five dangers for pastors' kids: pride produced by praise; woundedness; rebellion from restriction; familiarity with the faith; and bitterness borne of battles. "If you don't guard your heart, offenses are passed down to your children," he said. "The greatest thing we can tell our kids is be obedient because you are God's sons and daughters, not because you are the pastor's kids."

New officers for the 2004 Pastors' Conference were elected without opposition: President Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Church of Pensacola, Fla.; Vice President Bryan Smith, pastor of First Church of Van Buren, Ark.; Secretary Hal Kitchings, pastor of First Church of Eustis, Fla., and former pastor of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Music was provided by the Annie Moses Band, Wintley Phipps and the Rick Webb Trio. Choirs from First Church of Dallas also performed. Away from the convention hall, ministers took advantage of a free family counseling service.

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
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FRONT PAGE

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Vines reiterates point

PHOENIX (EN) — Just in case America didn't hear him the first time, Jerry Vines made a point of speaking clearly at this year's Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in Phoenix: "All religions are not the same. All religions are not equally true." Vines, pastor of First Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and a former two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention, drew the ire of Muslims and others when at last year's Pastors' Conference he called the founder of Islam a "demon-possessed pedophile" as he made his point that Christianity as superior to Islam. That led to a later segment aired on the NBC Nightly News in which anchor Tom Brokaw described Vines as "preaching hate." Speaking in Phoenix this year, Vines acknowledged the news media waiting to hear whether he would address the topic again. He didn't disappoint, although he did not speak specifically of Islam. "I'm going to give all you media what you came for, and I'm going to say it slowly, so that even Tom Brokaw can get it," he said to a round of applause. "All religions are not the same. All religions are not equally true. There is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved except the name of Jesus." In a conference organized around a family emphasis, Vines preached on the Old Testament prophet Enoch, whom Scripture says "walked with God." He urged pastors to "walk on" and live "in step with God," continually preaching the Bible rather than sugar-coating the truth. God's children, like Enoch, will "walk out" of this world either through death or resurrection, Vines said. "Ladies and gentlemen, if you will walk with God, one day you will walk out."

Looking back

10 years ago

Joel Gregory, Southern Baptists' best known unemployed preacher, is offered the job of Dean of the Chapel at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Gregory abruptly resigned the pastorate of First Church, Dallas, in a leadership dispute with the congregation's former senior pastor, W. A. Criswell.

20 years ago

Bryant Cummings, Mississippi's "Mr. Sunday School," will retire as director of the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board after 25 years in that position.

50 years ago

W. Douglas Hudgins, pastor of First Church, Jackson, is elected vice-president of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention at a recent meeting in Nashville. Hudgins has represented Mississippi on the Executive Committee for the past five years.

Lamar County church burns on June 20

Okahola Church, Lamar Association, burned to the ground early on the morning of June 20, according to Billy Murphy, associational missions director. Murphy said the fire started in the back of the church and destroyed the worship center, the educational building, and much of the office space.

Murphy also noted that Pastor Eugene Haden had a large personal library, which was partially saved.

During the fire the office roof collapsed, protecting many of the church's records. The church rolls, financial records, and, according to the church's secretary, "even the checkbook" were saved, Murphy said.

Okahola Church suffered a similar tragedy several months ago when a portion of the church's building collapsed. The church was scheduled to vote on a contractor to rebuild the new worship center on this coming Sunday, Murphy said.

Several area churches have volunteered the use of their facilities. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Okahola Church is one of the fastest growing churches in Lamar Association, Murphy pointed out, with 39 baptisms and an average 185 people in Sunday School in 2002.

Family 'pillars' introduced at Phoenix rally

PHOENIX (EN and local reports) — The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) unveiled seven "pillars" that leaders believe will strengthen American families at a Kingdom Family Rally held June 16 in Phoenix on the eve of the SBC annual meeting.

In 2000, SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman called for formation of a council on family life to develop a comprehensive strategy to "call families back to God." Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., and a former two-term SBC president, was named chairman. Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, serves as a member of the council.

The council studied statistics related to American family life, brainstormed with people like James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Dennis Rainey of Family Life Today, and searched the Bible for texts relating to family issues. Building on principles Elliff has used in his premarital and family counseling, the council developed a statement of Christian family principles called "The Seven Pillars of a Kingdom Family."

A parade of presidents from various SBC entities spoke briefly as each of the seven pillars rose symbolically from the stage floor. "Mystery guests" gave testimonies relating to each pillar's emphasis:

- **Honor God's authority.** Families are called to live under God's authority, explained Morris Chapman. Husbands, especially, need to stand in the front door and protect their families from the fiery darts of the devil, he said.

Chapman introduced Chaplain Jeff Struecker of Black Hawk Down book and movie fame, who is based at Fort Bragg, N.C., and currently stationed in Afghanistan.

Struecker used the insignia of his uniform to illustrate that he is under the authority of others and called to lead those under his authority by example.



IN APPRECIATION — Jim Futral (third from right), executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Board, receives a citation along with other members of the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life from Morris Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, for their work on the Kingdom Family initiative. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

- **Respect human life.** Richard Land, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, said respect for human life is a central pillar of faith that also should be central to the family. Life must be treasured from conception to death, he said, including faithful care for children with special needs and for aging parents.

Land introduced Trey and Brenda Palmer, who have five children, but also help care for an uncle who was seriously injured in an electrical accident.

Palmer said his great-grandfather, who spoke to the convention in 1949, was one of the first black men to address the SBC. Respect for human life "is paramount for a civil, free, and progressive society," he said.

- **Exercise moral purity.** The third pillar was previewed by Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., who said: "We are living in a day of moral confusion leading to moral anarchy."

The church is called to be a holy nation and a holy people, which should be reflected in Christian families, he said. That would allow others to observe them and say that only the existence of an omnipotent and sovereign God could explain the holiness of this people, he added.

Mohler introduced Pete and Debbie Livingston, who have two birth children and five children by adoption. The Livingstons' marriage survived a rocky 10-year start during which he was devoted to work and she had an extra-marital affair. After she became a Christian, they put their marriage back together.

"Folks, there is no Plan B for our marriages," Debbie Livingston said. "There is only God's radical plan."

- **Serve the church.** Jimmy Draper, president of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, challenged Baptists to guide their churches to lead others in faithfully serving the church. Draper introduced Gary Chapman, a staff member at Calvary Church in Winston-Salem, N.C. Chapman, author of popular books such as *The Five Love Languages*, said Jesus taught servant leadership. Chapman's own

marriage improved when he learned to ask his wife how he could serve her better and be a better husband, he said.

"When I let her teach me how to serve her, my wife began to reach out to me," he said.

- **Use time wisely.** SBC President Jack Graham said he never regretted a moment of the time he has given to his wife and children. "Time is a treasure, and we are to use it wisely," he admonished. Graham introduced motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, a Yazoo City native, who said building a successful marriage involves a lot of little things, beginning with the understanding that men and women are different and a commitment to work together.

"There has never been a man or woman as smart as both together as a team" following God's principles for the family, he said.

- **Practice biblical stewardship.** SBC Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins spoke briefly on the importance of stewardship and introduced professional bass fisherman Jimmy Houston, who spoke via videotape. Houston, who has given up prize money because he refuses to wear the patch of a beer company that sponsors a bass fishing circuit, said Christians should give both tithes and offerings to God. Those who don't tithe are not short-changing God but themselves, he said.

- **Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** The final pillar was introduced by SBC North American Mission Board President Bob Reccord and SBC International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin, a Mississippi native. Both cited their own experience to promote family-oriented evangelism.

Reccord promoted the value of families participating together in mission trips. Rankin spoke of how all family members contribute to the effectiveness of missionaries.

The rally attracted more than 4,000 participants, about half of whom remained through the nearly two-and-a-half-hour program. Participants in the rally were given a card and asked to sign a covenant declaring they will encourage their families to "build their lives upon these seven pillars of the kingdom family."

New COSBE officers selected



WMU meeting highlights mission service |

PHOENIX (EN) — "Survivor" could have been the theme of this year's annual meeting of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), but if viewers of the popular TV show had turned in they would have found a message of faith rather than fear on this stage.

Gathered in Phoenix prior to the SBC annual meeting, WMU members heard testimonies from a breast cancer survivor, a survivor of a shooting in a mission hospital, and a former missionary who survived her husband's death at a young age.

The women also celebrated the 90th anniversary of Girls in Action (GA), the mission organization for pre-teen girls, and re-elected Janet Hoffman as president and Yolanda Calderon as recording secretary.

WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee announced a new GA Alumnae of Distinction Award named in memory of Martha Myers, one of three Southern Baptist missionaries slain at the Baptist hospital in Jibla, Yemen, on Dec. 30. The award will be given annually to a GA who exhibits a missions lifestyle.

Mission worker Don Caswell, who was wounded by the gunman in Yemen, and his wife Teri testified of their call to return to Yemen. "On Aug. 1, we plan to go back to Yemen," Teri Caswell said. "By His grace and mercy, we will stand. God will walk us through. He has proven himself to us."

Brenda Ladun, a TV news anchor in Birmingham and author of *Getting Better, Not Bitter*, said the day she learned she had breast cancer was the worst day of

her life — but God turned it into a blessing, she added. God used cancer, "a terrible, despicable thing," to bring her to her knees, thanking God for all God had done in her life.

"The only thing we need in our lives is the Lord Jesus Christ," Ladun said. "God took the worst day of my life and made it the best day of my life. I learned I'm not in control anymore. God is in control."

Christina Beatty Olson, whose missionary husband Charles addressed the SBC annual meeting two years ago before dying of cancer, told that God likes happy endings. After the pain and grief of losing her husband, she was not looking for a happy ending, she admitted, but God placed in her path a missionary whose wife had died. The two began to commiserate and console each other's grief. They married in December, blending their eight children into a new family. Now, they believe God has called them to return to North Africa and the Middle East as missionaries.

"God's goal is not about making us happy," she said. "It is not about us. It's about Him. His plan, through our pain and our sorrow and our joy, is to see people all around the world come to know Him. His plan is to bring glory to himself."

Testimonies highlighted each of the WMU annual meeting's four general sessions. Among them:

- Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of Illinois WMU, told of leading a 15-woman team to Ghana to build homes.



- Lucy Driggers, who serves with her husband, Larry, International Mission Board associate for West Africa, traced her pilgrimage from her call to missions as a GA at age 12 through various places of service. "Don't park your car beside the road," she said. "Keep going down that winding road" with God.

- A missionary working among Muslims in Southeast Asia told of his own pilgrimage of faith as a college student, learning to disciple others and becoming a summer missionary in Branson, Mo.

WMU LEADERS — Wanda Lee (right) executive director/treasurer of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Janet Hoffman, WMU national president, present the WMU's annual report June 17 to messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in the Phoenix Civic Center. (BP photo by Gibbs Frazier)

LITTLE IS GREAT

In the mindset of our world, it used to be that BIG was better and BIGGEST was best. For instance — big cars, big houses, big machines, big organizations, big ideas, big crowds — big everything was where we thought the finest could be found. But, things have radically changed over the last several years and now little things have become big things!

Today, nanotechnology is a significant attention-getter. This area of study comes from the Greek word, nanos, which means "dwarf" or "small in size," and it is affecting everything around and about us. So that you will understand how small we are talking about, try this: Take one hair from your head and lay it on a table. Divide that one hair into one hundred thousand slices. Please understand this may not be easy and it may take you a while. Now, when you get that done, take one of those slices and examine it, for it is one nanometer wide. One nanometer is a billionth of a meter and today material is actually being measured that small.

Apparently, these scientists who are looking out there into this tiny little world are dreaming of things as they could be if they are small enough. Already, we have available a tiny little camera that can be swallowed and then it can examine the entire digestive tract. Is that incredible or what? Other small, microscopic cameras can be inserted to probe and look



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

around with hardly making a noticeable incision. What used to be a large apparatus that would be implanted into someone to provide pacing for the heart, has become just a small, little quarter-size item to keep your heart going.

Nanotechnology is not of yesterday, but of tomorrow. It, of course, affects everything about us — our cars and the operation thereof; all the appliances within our homes; and space ships with all the hardware associated with them that needs to be smaller and smaller in order to do bigger and better things. It is interesting to think that long before nanotechnology was profitable or fashionable, the Lord recognized the value of small being great. Thinking big might sometimes need to be replaced by thinking tiny; for when we give attention to the small things, the big things may take care of themselves.

Just think about the nano thoughts that Jesus had about life. Maybe it is worthy for us to remember that Jesus talked about cups that are nanos. He said if you give a cup of cool water in His name, it will be blessed. Or, maybe think about

nano kids, for when Jesus was challenged and pressed to give an answer of who was the greatest in the Kingdom, He took a little child and set him in the midst of the people and told them to look at the little child and they would see the greatness in a little thing.

Or, maybe think about time in a nano way. Most of the time we think of time as being best if you have a lot of it; but, Jesus, while hanging on the cross, looked to the side and saw a man who had very little time left. Yet, that time was extremely important, valuable, and life changing for the thief on the cross who turned to and trusted in Jesus, and found hope and life everlasting. His time was small!

Obviously, God doesn't measure things like we do. The God of all power, who understands all things, knows that small can be large and that it is possible for Him to take what seems so finite and make it into something infinite. Or, He can take the little and make it great. God is that kind of God, with that kind of power, and with that kind of insight. He can take the little things He has invested in your life — your abilities, gifts, and

your seemingly small contributions, and enlarge, multiply, and magnify them to do things beyond what anyone would have ever conceived.

Little becomes great in the hands of a God who understood nanotechnology before any of us ever dreamed that the miniature can be the mighty under His control. I dare say that there are some who are reading this who probably have thought of yourself as a nano person and because you did not bring the big, the mighty, or the bombastic to the table of life, you thought you were unimportant. You are wrong! You are a thousand times wrong! God made you like He wanted you to be, gifted you with what He wanted to give you, and all the while knowing that He could take what you have and who you are and do something awesome if you would just let Him.

Our God is awesome! He is awesome not only because He can fill the entire space of all creation, but because He can touch an atom and shape, remake, and bless others through it. You might want to watch for God moving about in your life to do the big things, but don't forget that sometimes the biggest things He does are accomplished by the little things that He looks for in us. It was a little lunch from a little boy that fed 5,000 people miraculously one day, and it well may be that God has something big in store to bless your life and your world if you will give Him the little things.

Jack Graham, others reelected by acclamation

PHOENIX (EN) — Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church in Plano, Texas, was re-elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) on June 17 without opposition. At the time of the election, 6,830 messengers had registered during the first day of the annual meeting. Graham will serve this year with two Californians elected vice presidents without opposition:

- Rob Zinn, pastor of Immanuel Church in Highland, Calif., was elected first vice president. Zinn was a member, youth minister, and associate pastor before becoming pastor of the 7,300-member church. He serves on the SBC Executive Committee and is a former trustee chairman at Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca.

- William Wagner, professor of evangelism and missions at Golden Gate Seminary, was elected second vice president. Wagner has "lived out a life of missions," said Paul Kim, a Southern Baptist missionary pastor of Brookland Church in Cambridge, Mass., who nominated Wagner.

Two other SBC officers were re-elected without opposition:

- Recording Secretary John Yeats, editor of the Baptist Messenger in Oklahoma City.

- Registration Secretary James Wells, director of missions for Tri-County Association in Branson, Mo.

STAFF CHANGES

Liberty Church, Liberty, called **James A. Sadler** as interim pastor on Sept. 1, 2002. He accepted the

Sadler

call as pastor in May 2003.

Parkway Church, Tupelo, has called **Katey Witt** as Youth Minister. Witt has served as an educator in the junior high public schools for eight years. She is a graduate of Mississippi State University.

REVIVAL DATES & HOMECOMINGS

Clear Day Harmony, Brookhaven: June 29; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served at noon and an afternoon song service will follow at 1 p.m.; Bruce Crosby, preaching; Clear Mountain Quartet, music; Larry Eickenloff, pastor.

Calvary, Bogue Chitto: July 12-13; 100th anniversary; Sat. night, former pastors reception; Sunday, special service; for more information, call (601)734-6951.

Gatesville, Crystal Springs: June 29; worship, 11 a.m.; a fellowship meal will follow; Harvey Dallas, guest pastor; Matt Armstrong, pastor.

D'Lo, D'Lo: July 13-16; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; covered dish lunches will be served daily; James Messer, Theodore, Ala., evangelist; Jeff Sanders, music; Robert Sones, pastor.

Main Street, Mendenhall: June 29-July 2; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Clark Stewart, Harmony, Crystal Springs, evangelist; Bob Thames, Seminary, music; Dewitt Mitchell, pastor.

Longview, Starkville: July 27-30; Terry Long, preaching; Terry Veasey, music; Steve Huber, pastor.

Clarke Venable, Decatur: July 13-16; Jim Futral, MBCB, preaching; church choirs, music; Alex

Craft, choir director.

Edna, Columbia: June 29-July 2; Sunday, 9:45 a.m., 11 a.m., and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, MBCB, preaching; Tim Morrison, Bethel, Monticello, music; Kenny Peavey, pastor.

Improve, Columbia: July 27-30; Sun.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Brian Upshaw, evangelist; John Bell, music; Hiram Campbell, pastor.

First, Lambert: June 29; worship, 10:30 a.m.; lunch will follow; A. M. "Sonny" Moore, speaking; Jimmy Smith, music.

Bond, Bond: June 29; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship will follow; dinner at noon; concert, 1 p.m.; J. R. Hume, speaking; Tonya Lozenby, music; bring your favorite dish.

Unity, Moselle: June 28; 25th anniversary; Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., lunch will follow, singing will follow; James Taylor and Curtis Shaffer, speakers; Valton Douglas, pastor.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Debbie C. Norris has been named Mississippi College's Vice President for Planning and Assessment and Dean of the Graduate School. Norris began her teaching career at MC as Associate Professor in Business Administration. She received the BSBA degree from Mississippi College, the Master of Education degree from Mississippi State University, and the Doctor of Philosophy



Norris

Degree in Education from the University of Mississippi. During her tenure at Mississippi College, Norris has served as Director of Self-Study and Chair of the Steering Committee; Director of International Programs; Director of Institutional Advancement; Graduate Dean; and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs. She is a member of Parkway Church, Clinton, and is a member of the Handbell Choir.

Survival Weekend, hosted by the William Carey College (WCC) BSU, will take place Aug. 15-17, on the Hattiesburg campus. Registration will begin in the Student Conference Center Aug. 15 at 5 p.m. Activities include seminars about campus living. Topics will include relationships, finances, roommates, and study tips. Other activities include area church tours, bowling, entertain-

ment, and Fear Factor games and prizes. All meals will be provided by the local churches. Survival Weekend is open to all new freshmen and transfer students entering WCC. The registration fee is \$30. For more information, call (601) 318-6161 or (800) 962-5991, ext. 161.

The following graduates were conferred degrees by **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary or Southeastern College** at Wake Forest, Wake Forest, N.C., on May 24. Angela Carman Salmon, Southaven, received a BA in Biblical Studies with a minor in History of Ideas. Larry Steven McDonald, Jackson, received a Ph.D.

Summer enrollment is up by 208 students at William Carey College (WCC) in comparison with a year ago for a total of 1,944 students. Of that number 999 students are enrolled in graduate classes on WCC campuses in Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and New Orleans. William Carey College posted a record enrollment of 2,401 students this past spring. The Fall application deadline for admission is July 18 for all new freshman or transfer students. For more information, call (601) 318-6103 or (800) 962-5991, ext. 103.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Temple Church Bible Drill Participants, Hattiesburg

Students from Temple Church, Hattiesburg, recently participated in Bible Drills. Pictured (from left, front) are Bailey Anglin, Elizabeth Paterson, Michele Stover, (back) Craig Paterson, and Tiffany Stover.

The Awana Club of Iuka Church, Iuka, concluded on May 18 with many children receiving awards. Alicia Brock and Pazlee Walker received the Timothy Award. The Clubber of the year was received by Ashley Counce in the girls division and Ethan

Jones in the boys division. Pictured (from left) are Brock and Walker.

Two youth and three children of Holly Church, Corinth, participated in Bible Drills. Pictured (from left) are Krissy Bradley, Amber Bradley, Molly Morrow, Tony Morrow, pastor, Haley Knepp, and Shannon Bugg.



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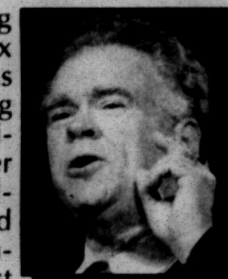
Patterson confirms meeting

PHOENIX (BP) — At press time on June 24, Southwestern Seminary trustees planned to convene on the same day in Ft. Worth to consider Paige Patterson, current president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., as the next president of the Fort Worth school.

In an interview at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Phoenix with Dallas Morning News religion writer Berta Delgado and the Southern Baptist Texan newspaper, Patterson confirmed that he had agreed to the meeting.

Soon after Southwestern Seminary president Kenneth Hemphill announced his retirement on April 8, speculation surfaced that Patterson was the leading candidate. The 60-year-old native Texan served as pastor of churches in Louisiana, Arkansas, and his home state before spending 28 years in theological education. For 17 of those years, he served as president of Criswell College in Dallas.

Patterson is often described as the co-architect of the conservative resurgence in the SBC along with Houston judge Paul Pressler. He conceded there is little that the Southwestern Presidential Search Committee doesn't know about him. "I live my life in a gold-fish bowl," he said.



Patterson

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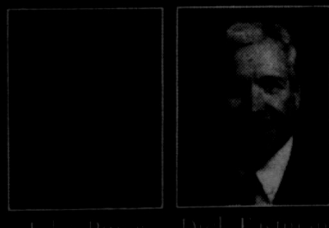
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BAPTIST COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS

OBITUARY



Leavell

Cornelia Frances Leavell, 89, an emeritus Southern Baptist missionary to Hawaii, China, and Hong Kong, died on May 27.

She was appointed by the International Mission Board in 1942. She directed kindergarten ministries of Olivet Church, Honolulu, before transferring to Shanghai, China, in 1947 to direct the Sung Tak Kindergarten. In 1949, she returned to Hawaii to direct the kindergarten ministry of University Church, Honolulu. She became the registrar at Hong Kong Baptist Hospital from 1964-1970, when she began serving in business management for the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Hong Kong and Macao. She then served as a kindergarten teacher for Taip Church, Hong Kong, before retiring in 1982.

Leavell was a graduate of Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain and the Woman's Missionary Union Training School, Louisville, Ky. She also studied at George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville.

Before her appointment as a missionary, she taught school in Bristol, Tenn. After retirement, she made her home in Starkville until 1990 when she moved to Lakewood Manor Retirement Center, Richmond, Va. Interment was in Oxford.



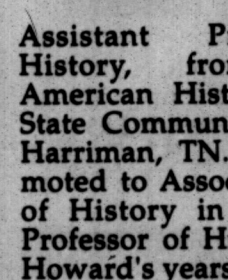
Baker

Several students graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary or Boyce College during the school's commencement services on May 16. R. Albert Mohler Jr., the seminary's ninth president, gave the commencement address. Boyce College Dean Jerry Johnson delivered the school's commencement address. The graduates are Alan Jeffrey Pinnow, MACSA; James Glen Moore, Hernando, M.Div.; Philip C. Ellis, Nettleton, D.Min.; James Leodies Tucker, Plantersville, D.Min.; and Morris Lynn Baker, Oxford, D.Ed.



Ellis

Ronald W. Howard, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences since 1998 at Mississippi College, has been named Vice President for Academic Affairs. Howard came to MC in 1977 as Assistant Professor of History, from teaching American History at Roane State Community College in Harriman, TN. He was promoted to Associate Professor of History in 1983 and to Professor of History in 1989. Howard's years at Mississippi College included being named Director of the American Studies Seminar, a summer graduate program in the Social Sciences; chosen as the 1983 Distinguished Professor of the Year; given the Research Residence Award, New York State Library for 1989-90; named Distinguished Lecturer in



Howard

Arts & Sciences in 1991, and named MC Lecturer in the Humanities in 1996. Howard earned a bachelor's degree in History and Political Science, magna cum laude, from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN and an M.A. degree in History and Ph.D. in History from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. Howard is married to Kathleen Krulac, and they have two sons, John Michael and Stephen. They live in Clinton and are members of Northside Church where he serves as deacon.

The following students graduated from Leavell College of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) on May 16: Leland Wardell "Dale" Algee, received the church music certificate; Paula Smith Binns, received the associate in women's ministry degree; James "Barry" Brand, received the church music certificate degree; Betty June Bryant, received the church music certificate; John Alan Bullen, received a BA degree; Karla Cloutier, received the church music certificate; John D. Cooke, received the church music certificate; Stephen M. "Steve" Graham, received the church music certificate; Carol Burleson Horton, received a BA in Christian Ministry degree; Ronald Dale "Ron" Leonard, received the church music certificate; Troy Marc Mercer, received a BA in Christian ministry degree; Christopher Ray Nash, received the church music certificate; Tetyana Palykhata, received a BA in music degree; Robert Martin "Rob" Schepers, received the church music cer-



Arnett

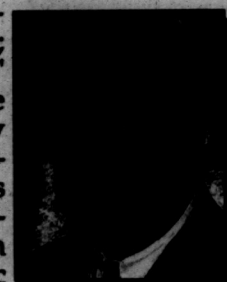
tificate; and Joseph J. "Joedy" White, received the church music certificate.

The following students graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) on May 17: Bradley Keith Arnett received the doctor of philosophy degree in New Testament and Greek; John "Keith" Grubbs, Pearl, received the doctor of ministry degree in expository preaching; Charles "David" Smith, Ellisville, received the doctor of ministry degree in evangelistic church growth; Rex William Baker received the master of divinity degree; Michael Barber received the master of arts in worship ministries degree; Reginald L. "Reggie" Bridges received the master of divinity degree in biblical languages; Ian Thomas Brou received the master of divinity degree in Christian thought; Eric W. Brown received the master of divinity degree; Joseph Hardin "Joe" Cole received the master of divinity degree; Todd Robert Cole received the master of divinity degree in Christian education with a specialization in youth ministry; Bernard Allen "Smokey" Gibson, Jr. received the master of arts in Christian education degree; Carrie "Brooke" Griffith received the master of arts in Christian education degree in childhood education; Raymond W. Holder received the master of divinity degree in pastoral care; Daniel Bradford "Brad" Howard received the master of divinity degree; Joanna Miley King received the



Grubbs

master of divinity degree in worship leadership; Carol Collins McElroy received the master of arts in Christian education degree in childhood; Tracy L. Phillips received the master of arts in Christian education degree in collegiate ministry; Petro Palykhata received the master of arts in marriage and family counseling degree; Jonathan "Craig" Richardson received the master of divinity degree in Christian education; Jane Elizabeth Schenck received the master of divinity degree in psychology and counseling; Alison Amanda "Mandy" Trammell received the master of divinity degree; Stephen Paul received the master of divinity degree.



Smith

Daniel J. Barber, Ocean Springs, received an award in international church planting at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's annual Awards Ceremony on May 15. Barber was the recipient of the Keith E. Eitel Outstanding International Church Planting Award. Barber was presented the award by Southeastern President Paige Patterson, L. Russ Bush, the Academic Vice President/Dean of the Faculty, and Registrar Sheldon H. Alexander.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF Taylorsville, Miss., is currently accepting resumes for the position of full-time Director/Minister and education. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 357, Taylorsville, MS 39168, attn: search committee.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Josh, Hunter, and Justin Hinton

Gatesville Church, Crystal Springs, recently honored their Bible Drillers. Joshua and Justin Hinton have been in church, association, and state drills for seven years. Their older brother Christopher has graduated, and their younger brother Hunter just had his first year. Pictured (from left) are Josh, Hunter, and Justin Hinton.

The Women on Missions of Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven, held their annual mother/daughter banquet recently. La Linda Fortenberry was the guest speaker. Music was provided by some of the GAs; Greta Stogner and her daughter, Lissy Smith, GA leader, and her granddaughter.

The youth of First Church, Flora, recently participated in a True Love Waits Commitment Service. Symbolizing their com-

mitment, each youth was presented a ring by their parents.

Gatesville Church, Crystal Springs, will hold VBS for grades 1-12 July 7-11 at 6:30 p.m. nightly. The nursery will be provided.

Bayou Talla Fellowship Church, Kiln, will host its second annual I Love America Day and BBQ Cook-off on June 29. Festivities begin at 10:30 a.m. with a rally in the church auditorium. Lunch will be

served at noon and local BBQ chefs will compete for the best BBQ. Local bands will provide music. Space Walks, Dunking



Moms and GAs of Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven

booths, and other activities will be ongoing. Donations will be taken. Proceeds will go to help in support of Hope Haven Children's Shelter, Bay St. Louis. Anyone wishing to compete in the cook-off or participate in other events should call (228) 255-1118 for information.

Old Hebron Church, New Hebron, will host a Southern

Gospel Concert featuring Mary Cox McCain and Second Generation on June 29 at 6 p.m. Jon Haines is pastor.

Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, will hold God and Country Day on June 29 beginning at 10:30 a.m. Sammy Popwell, former chauffeur to President Reagan, will be the guest speaker. There will be a recognition of all POW's and Veterans.

Longview Church, Starkville, will present Legacy of Faith in an outdoor concert on June 29 at 7 p.m. Steve Huber is pastor.

Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will present a Mayberry Mania Dinner Theater July 9-12 at 6:30 p.m. nightly. Tickets are \$13 each and can be purchased

through the church music office at (601) 925-6447. Proceeds will fund missions projects through Morrison Heights Church.

First Church, Newton, will host a Vocal Freedom Seminar on July 14 and 15 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. The seminar is \$25 per person. For more information, call (601) 683-2066.

Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, will present Oliver North, best-selling author and former U.S. Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, as the guest speaker for the annual I Love America Celebration on June 29 at 8 a.m., 9:45 a.m., and 11:30 a.m.



Youth of First Church, Flora

James E. Messer Ministries will sponsor Evangelism Bible Conferences at First Church, Batesville, Aug. 3-6; First Church, Florence, Sept. 28-Oct. 2; and First Church, Columbia, Nov. 2-5.

Main Street Church, Mendenhall, will hold a retirement reception honoring Dewitt Mitchell, pastor, on June 29 from 2-4 p.m.

Grace Church, Philadelphia, will hold a reception honoring Dennis Duvall on June 29 from 2-4 p.m. Duvall has resigned as pastor to accept the position of chaplain at the Rush Foundation Hospital, Meridian.

First Church, Shannon, will honor Mark and Doris Cayson with a retirement reception on June 29 at 2 p.m. in the Dabbs Family Life Center. If you would like to send a note for the scrapbook, please mail it to the church at P.O. Box 21, Shannon, 38868.

Union Church, Union Church, will present patriotic music featuring Bill Clark on June 29 at 1:30 p.m. Ben Presnell is pastor.



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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Worshipping God

Psalm 100:1-5; Revelation 5:1-10

By Karen Hollowell

How do you define worship? Do you think it means to go to church, listen to the sermon, and sing songs? Do you think it means to go to Sunday School and participate in the discussion? Maybe you think you've worshiped if you gave your testimony or had an emotional experience when someone else testified or sang. Do you see what's wrong with everything listed above? There's nothing bad about any of them; it's just that their emphasis is on us and not on the One that worship is for — God.

This week, we focus on the 5th purpose of the church-worship. Oh, how we have missed the mark on this. Have you ever said or heard said, "I just didn't get anything out of church today?"

Because our ideas of worship are so dramatically different from what we should truly be experiencing, I wondered how a secular dictionary would define worship. Webster reads "reverence for a sacred object; high esteem or devotion for a person, or to attend a religious service." Worship is so much more than this. We're not supposed to "get anything" out of worship. God is supposed to get something out of us! Worship is reverence, honor, praise, and service shown to God (Disciple's Study Bible). It is not a show that we put on to entertain others or a façade that will prove to people that we are sufficiently spiritual.

Why should we worship? Read Psalm 100. Verses three and five tell us why-God is our maker, we are His sheep, He is

merciful and His truth endures through all time.

We don't worship God to make us feel good. We don't worship God so we can make a good impression on someone or please another person. Again, these things are focused on us, and when that happens,

worship in spirit and truth has not occurred. John writes in Rev. 5:1-10 that Jesus is worthy of worship because He was the perfect Lamb, slain for our sins. It's all about Him. If there is a church service in which everyone is focused totally on God and His son, Jesus, then worship is occurring. If there are people who give to the needy, study their Bible, witness to the lost, or help their neighbor, with no intention other than to present it as an act of devotion to God, then those people are worshipping the Lord.

Many people will say that you can worship anywhere, not just in a church, and they

would be right. Worship is not limited to your church and was never intended to be confined to a building. Others say that they like to worship alone, because they feel uncomfortable in a crowd. Some might say that since they can't sing or teach a Sunday School class, that they will just worship at home. Private worship is important and essential in an individual's life, but the gathering together of God's people is imperative to Christians. If we do truly worship God in private, then we will understand the need and desire to be with other Christians. We should not resent coming together, looking on it as a chore, a duty that others expect us to fulfill. Read Psalm 100 again.

"Worship the Lord with gladness" (v.2), "Enter his gates with thanksgiving...and his courts with praise" (v.4). Are you joyful when you gather when God's people?

I have also read that to worship is to give God pleasure. This means to give God pleasure in

everything that we do, think, and say. Does that seem all-consuming? It should because God intended worship of Him to be ever present, manifested, and ongoing in our lives. We get so caught up in churches today with styles of worship, order of worship, details of worship that we lose sight of who this is for. Worship is action. It's not a passive, once-a-week, event that occurs in which you may or may not get to participate. Worship means "serve." We must serve God simply because He is our creator, and being born-again, we have a new nature that longs to worship Him. As believers, we are going to be doing this eternally in the presence of Jesus. John writes in Rev. 5:13, "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, all that is in them singing: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!'"

Hollowell is member of Crosby Church, Crosby.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Don't Turn Back

Galatians 4:8-31

By Kiely Young

I asked the young friend that I had known since he was a young child, "What in the world are you doing? How can you possibly say you are now denying your faith in Christ and following a worldly philosophy?" He responded, "In studying anthropology, I have become agnostic." I told him, "I was there with your father when you professed your faith in Jesus Christ. I was there when you were baptized. I knew you when you were involved with excitement in our youth ministry. How can you say you are going back to a world of man's legalism?" He had no answer.

Paul was asking similar questions of the believers in the churches of Galatia. How could they conceivably go back

to the bondage of Judaism and the law? **Examine Your Behavior (vv. 4:8-11).**

Paul reminds the Galatians that their behavior is in reality putting them back into the same bondage from which they had been delivered when they trusted Christ. They were abandoning liberty for bondage. They were giving up the power of the Gospel for the weakness of the law. They were surrendering the wealth of Christ for the poverty of the law. They were now trying to find righteousness in the keeping of "days and months and seasons and years." They were reverting to ritual, abandoning the rich relationship with Christ.

There are times we get so caught up in tradition, which can be good, that we miss out on the relationship which Christ really wants for us. Christianity is

about a relationship with Christ, not a religious experience.

Enjoy Your Blessings (vv. 4:12-16).

Paul has appealed to their logic, now he appeals to their heart. They had "connected" when he had previously ministered among them. His physical affliction had

brought him to Galatia. They had received him graciously and had been willing to make great sacrifices for him as he ministered among them, now they seemed to reject him and the Gospel. They had been tricked by the Judaizers into believing they could be better "believers" by adding the law and circumcision to their beliefs. They seemed to look upon Paul as an enemy now when he again confronted them with the truth.

I do remember the words of my seminary preaching professor. "A preacher has two basic responsibilities. He must comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable." How true. We must never cease to present the truth. Jesus said, "You shall

know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). He also said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

This knowledge should bring assurance and peace to every believer.

Strive For Maturity (vv. 4:17-20).

Paul now appeals to their seeming desire to know more. He warns them of the zeal of the Judaizers to "court them" to win them back to the bondage of the law. He would say their real motivation was to make a good showing in the flesh, another notch on their spiritual log. Paul exhorts them to be zealous, but for the right reason, that of spiritual maturity. Paul would have them to see their goal as coming to be Christlike. As he wrote to the church in Ephesus, he would have them to "grow up in all things in Him who is the head-Christ..." (Eph. 4:15).

We are faced with similar circumstances today with cultic groups that take pride in the number of converts they claim

from conservative, Bible teaching, Christ centered denominations. We must strive together and pray intensely, especially for new believers to make sure they are well established in their walk with Christ. We must nurture them and disciple them until they are mature Spirit-filled, and Holy Spirit led multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ. Far too often, we are anxious to gain more "notches on our spiritual logs" with new believers only to leave them to the wolves of other cultic who sweep them away with half-truths without being truly nurtured. Jesus said "Go and make DISCIPLES of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

We are to make sure our disciples are well founded, not tossed about by every wind of doctrine. We want them to be able to teach others to follow in the same pattern.

Young is the director of the Sunday School Dept. at the MBCB in Jackson.

Hispanic leaders convene prior to start of SBC meeting

PHOENIX (BP) — More than 400 mostly Hispanic pastors, church planters, lay leaders, and denominational leaders took part in a Let's Celebrate! church planting convocation at North Phoenix Church June 16 prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

The church multiplication team of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) church planting group sponsored the sixth annual event. "Anytime that you gather to talk about church planting," said Gus Suarez, director of missions for the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, "you have to talk about celebration."

Moises Rodriguez, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Fort Worth, Texas, led in a prayer in both English and Spanish thanking God for the opportunity to gath-

er and for having so much to celebrate in the area of Hispanic church planting. Andres Panasiuk, representative of Crown Financial Concepts (CFC), shared with the group the new financial tools and special CD Church Planters Kit in Spanish that CFC will launching this year to help church planters in their labors.

"How can we help church planters?" Panasiuk asked. He said the answer is to "[make] their task easier by providing tools with which they can practice and teach stewardship and thus increase their resources."

Bobby Sena, field service partner representative for NAMB, said he was excited about the number of states represented at the meeting, 19, and that every SBC entity was represented at the meeting. Fernando

Amaro, director of missions for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, gave a presentation of the realities, needs and challenges in the state of Arizona.

Amaro was somber in his assessment of the challenge coming from the "Mormon wall" in the eastern part of the state where he said the newest Mormon temple was recently dedicated in the town of Snowflake. Another challenge noted by Amaro is in the Sedona region where "the leader of the Church of Satan in North America lived and taught." The area is a hotbed for New Age movements and satanic worship. Amaro also noted the challenge to the south of the "wave of Roman Catholicism."

In a state with a population of 5.3 million, one-fourth of whom are Hispanic,

there are only 428 Southern Baptist churches, less than 50 of which are Hispanic congregations, Amaro said. Allow God to touch [your] heart since the 6,000-plus new church planters needed to reach the Hispanics in Arizona are sitting on the benches in your church," he said.

A highlight of the evening was when Sena presented Fermin Whittaker, executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, with an award for "excellence as a leader, mentor and servant in Hispanic church planting." Whittaker is the highest-ranking Hispanic leader in the SBC today, who, with his wife Carmen, has served for many years in diverse capacities in the United States and Canada after coming to this country from Panama.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Good News! Saved by Grace

Galatians 1-2

By Karen Hollowell

Two weeks ago our church was immersed in Vacation Bible School. It is a very busy time with many details and much preparation—even in our small community. During the time that the children are with us, we as leaders and teachers have a great responsibility, not only for their physical safety, but also for the spiritual influence that we have over them.

Who influences you? Do you believe that influence is important—your influence in particular? Do you know that entire groups of people can be influenced by your words? Such was the case in Galatia, where Paul fervently and emphatically had to

stand up against a negative influence affecting the new believers there.

Jews came after Paul visit, distorting the Gospel by adding to it—adding rules and regulations that had to be followed. It wasn't enough to just have faith and accept God's gift of grace through Jesus Christ. To faith was added any number of man-made decrees.

The converts were easily influenced by this theology. It should be no surprise that there are many true believers today that are works oriented. We all fall into this trap at times.

We live in a society that extols hard work. You must do A and B to achieve C. Surely if we have faith in Jesus as our

risen Savior and acknowledge that He died for our sins and go to church, give to charity, teach Sunday School, etc., then we have earned salvation.

This is what the Galatians were being told long ago, and this is what is sometimes believed today.

Paul used some of his strongest language to refute this. "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned" (Gal. 1:8). He repeats this in verse 9. In Chap. 2, v. 16, Paul declares "We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

The purpose of this week's

lesson is not to emphasize that Christians will want to do good works if they are truly saved or to condemn works. This week, the purpose is purely evangelical—we are under grace, not the law. It is the simplicity of this message that gives some trouble as we've discussed earlier. We might say that it is the fast-paced, technologically complex time in which we live that makes us want to complicate theology, but that wasn't the case in first-century Galatia. The gospel of grace is always subject to perversion when even one person cannot accept that the man-made way is the wrong way. That's why influence is so important. Pastors, deacons, Sunday School teachers, and other church leaders need to be well-prepared when they present the Word. This isn't to say that mistakes will not be made—they are human. As recipients and hearers of the word, we have the responsibility to listen,

pray, and study ourselves. With the Holy Spirit's guidance, we will know if what we are hearing is in line with God's truth.

New believers need to hear this message more than any other. They've accepted Jesus and may be thinking, "Now what do I do?" The answer is, "Be free my brother or sister." In Jesus, we have true freedom. Under the law, we are slaves. As Paul said in Galatians 2:21, "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" I'm truly thankful that there is no list of rules and regulations that I have to check off as I've done them in order to earn salvation.

That would be a life of bondage. Christ did not come for that. He came to set us free and "...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Hollowell is member of Crosby Church, Crosby.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Use Your Freedom For Others

Galatians 5:1-15

By Kiely Young

A few years back I received a church brochure in the mail that really caught my attention. It was not particularly attractive, nor did it have special appeal for special ministries. As I read through their statement of faith, I was more than astonished. It described their conservative approach to scripture and the firm belief in Jesus Christ as Savior, but it went further, specifically with acceptable apparel, for both men and women. The acceptable dress included only long sleeves for men and women. Both must have closed collar at the neck. Women and girls must wear dresses with hems at the ankles. These were the acceptable "signs of Christians." I looked and wondered what Paul might have to say about this legalistic approach to dress.

Paul really begins to hit home with his address to the Galatians believers regarding their understanding of the law and grace.

Stand Firm (5:1).

Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death." Paul tells the Galatians to "Stand firm in the liberty by which Christ has made us free." Why would anyone want to put themselves back under the bondage of a legal system of religious do's and don'ts? In Christ we have received salvation and sanctification. Our conduct now is to please Christ, not some religious legal system.

Express Your Faith (5:2-6).

Paul challenges the Galatians with their desire to add the law and circumcision to their faith in Christ. He says there are certain consequences of such action. First, they would be trusting in human



Young

work for salvation, denying the power of Christ. "Christ will profit you nothing" (v.2). Second, they would then be obligated to keep the whole law, "debtor to the whole law" (v.3). Third, they would lose intimate fellowship with Christ, "fallen from grace" (v.4).

This does not mean they lose their salvation, but they deny the power of Christ in liberty, being bound in the law. Fourth, they miss the blessing of the "hope of righteous by faith" (v.5). A true believer in Christ is a life lived through the Spirit by faith in patient waiting for the hope of deliverance in Christ.

Stay On Course (5:7-12).

Paul picks up the illustration of the runner of a race who must stay on course to remain in the race, and asks, "Who hindered you?" Someone had steered them off their course. They had followed other directions. They were led astray. Paul reminds and encourages them, "I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will have

not other mind" (v.10). He says they must regroup, get back on track and finish the race.

He does remind them that the offenders, those who led them astray; the "leaven that affects the whole lump," will encounter judgment. Paul would say to those who want believers to be bound by keeping of the law for righteousness and circumcision should set the complete example themselves. Paul would remind us that God's grace is sufficient for our every demand of life. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (II Cor.9:8).

Serving Others (5:13-15).

"For you brethren, have been called to liberty...through love serve one another" (v.13). The distinguished radio Bible teacher stated there are three methods of trying to live the Christian life—two of them will not work. One is legalism, to which the Judaizers were trying to get the Galatians to revert. The other is the life of

license, which Paul asks in Romans 6, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!"

Here Paul exhorts the Galatians and all believers to fulfill all the law in love, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." He says this is done in the liberty of Christ by lovingly serving others. We could keep every one of the Ten Commandments, but gossip about our neighbors and show nothing of the love of God in our lives. The whole basis of our obedience to God is our relationship to Him.

"I have an extra day off this week," a husband told his wife. "I think I'll use it to fix Donna's bike and take Bill on that museum trip he's been wanting to go on." His wife responds, "That doesn't sound like a very exciting day off." He replied, "It does if you love your kids and really want to spend time with them." When love permeates the heart, God will use it to accomplish His purposes.

Young is the director of the Sunday School Dept. at the MCB in Jackson.

THE RAPIDS

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...one week prior to...
...self-addressed...

...are not date-sensitive will...
...on a space-available basis...
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Crossover Az. fields pre-convention events

PHOENIX, Ariz. — As two-year-old Sophie and four-year-old Jake approach a dusty, four-door sedan exiting off I-17 onto Carefree Highway, the car slows to respond to the children's outstretched arms — but as the children stand on tiptoes and stretch



CROSSOVER WITNESS — Bonnie Martin, a member of Celebration Fellowship in Mesa, Ariz., tells children about Jesus during a block party, one of many events comprising Crossover Arizona, jointly sponsored by Arizona Southern Baptists and the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP photo by Bob Carey)

The Lees, of Phoenix, participated in one of 62 events taking place June 14-15 and June 22-23 as part of Crossover Arizona. Crossover is an annual evangelism and ministry event surrounding the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. Crossover events traditionally include block parties, door-to-door witnessing, and prayerwalking.

The Arizona Crossover also included skateboarding events, water slides, and Christian concerts, as well as distribution of bottled water at key locations.

Many of the Crossover events represented "churches stepping out, doing things they'd never done before," said Jerry Martin, director of evangelism/missions for Valley Rim Association and local coordinator for Crossover. "Crossover was a huge success in that way."

The emphasis paired volunteers from across the nation with local churches. The Lees worked with their church, Tramonto Community Church, located north of Phoenix. Tamara Lee's husband Darren and seven-year-old son Spencer also helped hand out cold-water bottles to weary travelers on a hot, dry day in the desert with temperatures reaching 108 degrees.

"We think it's important to reach out to the community and teach them about Christ and having a relationship with him," Tamara Lee said. "We are making a presence and teaching our children to reach out to others."

Tramonto Community Church currently meets in a local school. The water distribution project is a follow-up to an earlier project where church members gave a box of four lightbulbs to each of the community's 350 homes. "With what our 30-member mission team did and with the folks walking and handing out water, we hope to see a great harvest," said Pastor Todd Felkel. "We are praying for our new church start, that we'll build a strong core group, for our land, and that God will

really open the door for us to start sharing the Gospel with the community."

Volunteers also prayerwalked in the community being developed around the property where the church one day will be located. Elsewhere, a group sent out to do door-to-door evangelism ended up shouting the Gospel to the top of a palm tree where a worker was trimming leaves. "They 'treed' him for Jesus," Yarborough said.

At an international festival in a downtown Phoenix park, a homeless man won a vehicle that was given away in a drawing for all who registered. "I thank the Lord that a homeless person, Louis Griego, won the give-away vehicle," said Jason Kim, who works with multicultural unit of Southern Baptists' North American Mission Board.

"He was so excited with the gift because he (now) has a place to sleep. He said he was lucky, but I told him that God who loves him knew and provided," said Kim.

Griego was one of 817 people registered for the festival, which was focused on ethnic groups and offered a dental clinic and health screenings. Volunteers also handed out diaper bags and samples to young mothers as well as answered questions about child care. Fourteen churches from eight ethnic groups hosted booths. Also, Khmer Baptist churches from Long Beach, Calif., and Euless, Texas, hosted a booth displaying the Cambodian culture, even though Phoenix does not yet have a Cambodian church.

Six youth from the Spanish mission of First Southern Baptist Church of Mesa, Ariz., helped with translation for Inner City Evangelism teams going door-to-door. By seeing the teams at work, "they learned they could be proactive in sharing their faith," Martin said. "After the first day, they were more interested in sharing (the Gospel) themselves than in translating (for the team)."

Bibliocipher

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XFTYT EBMYDRF RFD

NZKFRDTMY RT KT

BYRNBL ZO BO DCZI

XBL, FD YFBII FZQYDIH

ZORT FZY TXO AZR:

GMR RFD MANZKFR YFBII

FBCD KTHP RFZOKY ZO

ATYYDYYZTO.

ANTCDNGY

RXDORL-DZKFR: RDO

Clue: M = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans 12:5

out their short arms to offer bottles of water, the woman driving the car declines.

Sophie doesn't understand, and Jake looks confused. They turn to their mother for an explanation. "How could you refuse that face?" whispered Sophie and Jake's mother, Tamara Lee, as she tugged on her children to move away from the vehicle.

The Lee family does not let the people who turn down the offer of free water dampen their spirits; this would not be the last person to refuse the gift. What motivates the Southern Baptist family is a hope that at least one person would accept their water, and maybe because of that also one day accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

Frontiers of Faith teaches children at SBC meeting

PHOENIX (BP) — A Frontiers of Faith children's conference held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Phoenix paralleled the SBC's Kingdom Family focus by teaching children to honor their parents and love their brothers and sisters.

Brian Denton and his four brothers, David, Michael, Christopher, and Mark, led 200 children in a kids camp with a wild west theme, with cowboys, town sheriffs and talking horses utilizing songs, verses, games and skits to present object lessons centered around the Ten Commandments.

"The Ten Commandments represent the lawlessness that exists in our hearts without the love of Christ," Brian Denton noted. "By presenting the Ten Commandments in a unique and memorable way, we believe that children will have a greater

understanding of the justice of God, and ultimately the great love of God," he said.

Each commandment presented during the conference

had a practical lesson that the children could apply to their lives, "whether honoring parents, loving their brothers and sisters, telling the truth, and

not wanting other people's possessions," Denton said.

The Denton Brothers also focused the children's attention on missions by using crafts time to make a blanket to send to a children's orphanage in India. Toward the end of the conference, the children gave an offering to help the orphanage in India in buying a new school bus.

"This week, I had a small boy tell me he had been saving money all year to give to a special mission project and he is going to give his money to the orphanage in India," Denton recounted.

"We taught the lesson about the rich young ruler who came to Christ, and Christ told him that he must obey two commandments. First, he must love the Lord our God with all his heart. Then, he must love his neighbor as himself," Denton explained. "We are teaching that globally everyone is our neighbor and we must learn to give of ourselves by giving our money and time."



COWBOY TALES — Michael Denton tells a story to one of several groups making up the first-ever Children's Conference during pre-Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) events, as well as during the SBC annual meeting, June 16-18. The Children's Conference met in the Phoenix Civic Center, site of the SBC annual meeting. (BP photo by Kent Harville)